



1. Project Data

Project ID P133731	Project Name CG-Statistics Capacity Building Project	
Country Congo, Republic of	Practice Area(Lead) Poverty and Equity	
L/C/TF Number(s) IBRD-88510,IDA-55000,IDA-70540	Closing Date (Original) 15-Jun-2019	Total Project Cost (USD) 35,784,053.89
Bank Approval Date 09-Jun-2014	Closing Date (Actual) 30-Sep-2023	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	4,800,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	39,280,781.68	0.00
Actual	35,789,653.42	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) (p. viii), the project development objective (PDO) of the Republic of Congo Statistics Capacity Building Project was "to (a) *strengthen the National Statistical System (NSS) in the production and, dissemination of timely and robust statistics relevant for policies and decision making, and (b) promote the demand for statistical information.*"

The PDO was clarified and restated at the second restructuring (in 2018): "**to (a) strengthen the National Statistical System (NSS) in the production and dissemination of quality statistics relevant for policies**



and decision making, and (b) to promote the demand for statistical information." According to the second Project Paper (p. 6), the concept of robustness of statistics was not well-defined, while data quality could be more easily assessed using predefined international standards. Moreover, the term "timely" would be dropped because the project would finance only one round of data collection, while refocusing instead on building the foundation for future continuous and timely data production.

- b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?**
Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?
Yes

Date of Board Approval
21-Jun-2018

- c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**
Yes

d. Components

Component 1: Institutional Development: Human Resources, Organizational Structure, and Infrastructure (at appraisal) / **Improving the Institutional and Organizational Framework of the NSS** (at second restructuring) (*Appraisal: US\$6.6 million; US\$8.9 million at second restructuring and first additional financing (AF); US\$12.8 million at third restructuring; US\$13.1 million at the fourth restructuring and second AF; Actual: US\$12.25 million*) aimed to revise the organizational structure, strengthen the institutional capacity, and improve the information and communication technology infrastructure of the National System of Statistics (NSS), the *Institut National des Statistique* (National Institute of Statistics), and the *Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* (Center for Applied Statistics and Planning).

Component 2: Data Production, Dissemination, and Use of Statistics (at appraisal) / **Improving the Production, Dissemination, and Use of Statistics** (at second restructuring) (*Appraisal: US\$21.4 million ;US\$19.5 million at second restructuring and first AF; US\$13.8 million at third restructuring; US\$22.7 million at the fourth restructuring and second AF;Actual:US\$22.8 million*) supported the production (including archiving), dissemination (through an open data portal), and use (for monitoring, knowledge, and literacy) of data and statistics pertaining to: demography, census cartography, human development (labor and employment, education, and health), household living conditions, poverty and inequality, economics, finance, prices, international trade, balance of payments, government finances, public debt, agriculture, forestry, mining, oil, and gas.

Component 3: Project Management (*Appraisal: US\$5 million; US\$6.3 million at third restructuring; US\$7.2 million at the fourth restructuring and second AF; Closing: US\$6.6 million*) supported the project operating costs of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the *Institut National des Statistique*.

- e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates**



Dates. The project was approved on January 9, 2014, became effective on April 8, 2015, underwent a mid-term review (MTR) on September 24, 2018, and closed on September 30, 2023, more than four years past the original closing date of June 15, 2019.

Restructuring. The project was restructured four times, two of which involved AF.

- **Restructuring No. 1:** The first restructuring on February 3, 2017, with US\$0.9 million disbursed (2.5 percent of the final IDA and IBRD financing of US\$35.8 million), was prompted by the sharp decline in oil prices over 2015 and the attendant fall in government revenues, which weakened the assumption that Government contributions would principally fund this project. The restructuring: (a) tapped the IDA as the main source of financing instead, at least for ongoing activities, (b) revised the payment schedule for Government counterpart funds; (c) changed the percentage of expenditures to be financed in each category; and (d) changed the deadline for the submission of the Annual Work Plans (from December 31 to May 15).
- **Restructuring No. 2:** The second restructuring (and first AF) on June 21, 2018, with US\$5.7 million disbursed (15.9 percent of the final IDA and IBRD financing of US\$35.8 million) : (a) slightly revised the project development objective (see Section 2.A); (b) provided AF of Euro (EUR) 20.1 million (US\$25 million equivalent) from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); and (g) increased the percentage of expenditures to be financed under the original IDA credit to 100 percent retroactive to January 1, 2018; (f) revised the total amount of counterpart funding to reflect the deposit of US\$3.6 million made by the Government (instead of the US\$28.2 million initially programmed) and eliminated any further counterpart funding; (e) reallocated of funds between and within project components to provide funding for the construction of the new complex for the *Institut National des Statistique* and the *Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification*; (h) dropped some activities related to administrative data and institutional strengthening to focus on relevant priority activities; and (c) revised the results framework (for indicators to better capture project results); (d) extended the closing date by 22 months from June 30, 2019 to April 30, 2021. The AF would fund new activities requested by the Government: (a) the construction of a new complex for the *Institut National des Statistiques* and the *Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* ; (b) implementation of a general enterprise census; (c) introduction of performance-based payments as a means to increase motivation and performance of staff; (d) technical assistance to support the macroeconomic framework committee; and (e) support for the preparation of a National Development Plan (NDP).
- **Restructuring No. 3:** The third restructuring on April 14, 2021, with US\$19.1 million disbursed (53.4 percent of the final IDA and IBRD financing of US\$35.8 million): (a) cancelled activities that did not contribute to achieving the project development objective; (b) reallocated resources among the project components; (c) reallocated funds among the disbursement categories, triggered by the cancellation of the main activity under the Performance Based Payment; and (d) extended the closing date by 29 months to September 30, 2023.
- **Restructuring No. 4:** The fourth restructuring (and second AF) on March 30, 2022, with US\$29.3 million disbursed (81.8 percent of the final IDA and IBRD financing of US\$35.8 million): (a) provided a second AF EUR 9 million (US\$10 million equivalent) from the IDA. The AF would fill the funding gap in three activities: (a) the scholarship program; (b) the population and housing census; and (c) the national household budget survey.

Project Cost, Financing, and Borrower Contribution. The project was estimated to cost US\$33 million at appraisal -- US\$4.8 million would be financed by an International Development Association credit (covered by a Financing Agreement for SDR 3.1 million on July 7, 2014) and US\$28.2 million by



Government counterpart funds. The project cost, Bank financing, and Government counterpart funding changed from that at appraisal and approval with subsequent restructuring episodes.

- At the second restructuring (and first AF), the project was estimated to cost US\$33.4 million -- US\$29.8 million would be financed by the IDA and the IBRD -- the original US\$4.8 million from the IDA plus US\$25 million in AF from the IBRD (covered by a Loan Agreement for EUR 20.1 million on June 21, 2018) -- and US\$3.6 million by the Government.
- At the third restructuring, the project was estimated to cost US\$32.9 million -- US\$29.3 million would be financed by the IDA (US\$0.5 million was cancelled) and IBRD and US\$3.6 million by the Government.
- At the fourth restructuring (and second AF), the project was estimated to cost US\$43 million -- US\$39.4 million would be financed by the IDA and IBRD (US\$29.3 million plus US\$10 million in AF from the IDA (covered by a Financing Agreement of EUR 9 million on March 30, 2022) and US\$3.6 million by the Government.

The actual project cost was US\$41.6 million -- US\$35.8 million was disbursed by the IDA and IBRD -- consisting of US\$3.8 million of the revised IDA credit of US\$4.3 million plus US\$22.4 million of the IBRD loan of US\$25 million (first AF) plus US\$9.5 million of the IDA credit of US\$10 million (second AF) -- and US\$3.6 million by the Government.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The project objectives aimed to address development constraints posed by the country's weak statistical system and were relevant to the country's development priorities and the Bank Group's country strategy.

Binding Constraints to Development. The Republic of Congo's weak statistical system was not helpful to the country's development aspirations and was detrimental to its economic performance -- the inability of the statistical system to provide reliable, timely, and accurate data about many aspects of the economy and society hampered the Government's and the private sector's ability to accurately assess the country's economic and social situation, to design strategies and craft policies that addressed pressing problems, and to monitor and evaluate development programs. The statistical system was weak in many aspects: (a) the country's Statistical Capacity Score -- measuring the quality of statistical practices, collection activities, and data availability relative to benchmarks -- was 48 (out of 100) (World Bank, 2014, *Bulletin Board on Statistical Capacity*); (b) the NSS, established by law in 2009 (Law No. 8-2009), was widely decentralized -- consisting of the High Commission of Statistics, the *Institut National des Statistiques* (National Institute of Statistics), the statistical departments at line ministries, known as *Direction des Etudes et de Planification* (Studies and Planning Departments), academic institutions, and various units of the *Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale* (Bank of Central African States); (c) the *Institut National des Statistiques* did not fully exercise its role as coordinator of the NSS; (e) the NSS lacked qualified staff; and (e) all statistics for development planning were outdated and likely inaccurate -- the last conclusive census was conducted in 1996; the results of the census in 2007 were not released; there were no complete national accounts since



2009; and the last *Enquête Congolaise Auprès des Ménages* (Congolese Household Survey) was done in 2011.

Country Priorities. The project objectives were consistent with the country priorities at appraisal. The *NDP 2012-2016* articulated a development strategy focused on five "pillars": Governance, Transformation of the Economy, Development of Economic and Social Infrastructures, Social Development, and "Balanced" Development. Turning to the "the institutional and technical arrangements for carrying out actions, monitoring outcomes, and assessing effects and impacts [of the NDP]," the document argues for "strengthening the institutional framework for implementation and monitoring," including "the mechanism and the statistical system used to monitor and assess the strategy and the implications for building the capacities of the units concerned, particularly the National Statistics Institute and the Directorate-General of Planning and Development."

Bank Group Country Strategy. The project objectives were aligned with the Bank Group strategy in the Republic of Congo at closing. The *Country Partnership Strategy for the Republic of Congo for the Period FY20-FY24* committed Bank Group support to the country's development strategy organized around two "strategic focus areas": Strengthen Economic Management to Create an Improved Climate for Private Sector-Led Growth and Reduce Fragility and Build Human Capital for Improved Social Inclusion. In implementing the partnership framework, the document asserts that "The WBG will support Congo's statistical capacity and data production by helping to strengthen the NSS in producing and disseminating statistics for policy, decision making, and transparency. The Congolese NSS is supported through the Statistics Capacity Building IPF. The WBG provides technical support to: (i) a Population and Housing Census in 2019, which will provide demographic and social sector statistics; (ii) a Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); (iii) a household budget consumption survey; and (iv) economic and sector statistics through an enterprise census. The WBG also supports the establishment of a permanent system to monitor indicators for national accounts, price statistics, external trade, informal sector and agriculture, which in turn will strengthen NSS capacity to monitor progress on poverty reduction."

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To strengthen the NSS in the production and, dissemination of timely and robust statistics relevant for policies and decision making.

Rationale

Theory of Change. A three-pillar approach would strengthen the production and dissemination of Government data and statistics. First, institutional capacity building would focus on the organizational strengthening of the agencies of the NSS and emphasize human resource development, including formal



education, on the job training, and mentorships of the staff in disciplines pertaining to statistics, informatics, data science, demography, and economics. Second, technical support for data production and dissemination would aid the development of statistical manuals and guidelines, the conduct of major surveys, including the *Cinquième Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitation* and the *Enquête Harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages*, the production of economic, financial, social, and sector statistics, and the dissemination of data products through an open data portal. Third, infrastructure spending would provide a building and equipment for the *Institut National des Statistiques* and the *Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* and support these agencies with the necessary information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure to perform their functions. Improvements in institutional capacity would be evidenced by an increase in the number of staff with formal degrees in statistics, informatics, and demography; in data production, by an increase in the proportion of data and statistical products published by the *Institut National des Statistiques* that followed international standards; and in data dissemination, by an increase in the proportion statistical output available to users through the open data portal.

Outputs. The project achieved the targets for five of the eight output indicators defined at appraisal.

- The institutional capacity assessment was completed for the staff of the *Institut National des Statistiques* (National Institute of Statistics) and **fourteen identified** *Direction des Etudes et de Planification* (Studies and Planning Departments), achieving the target. The project supported the assessment of the *Institut National des Statistiques* and the review of the technical partnership between the *Institut National des Statistiques* and line ministries. The evaluations allowed the *Institut National des Statistiques* to strengthen the capacities of the *Direction des Etudes et de Planification* to produce statistical yearbooks for the sector ministries.
- The **share** of sector statistical agencies that produced statistical information **that were endorsed as official statistics** by the *Institut National des Statistiques* increased from 30 percent in the baseline to 66.7 percent by closing, partially achieving the target of 80 percent. Sixteen of the twenty four agencies producing statistics -- 12 of the 18 *Direction des Etudes et de Planification*, two of the three research centers, and two the three technical and financial partners of the *Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale* (Bank of Central African States) -- produced statistical information endorsed as official statistics by the *Institut National des Statistiques*.
- The African Chart of Statistics and the Code of Conduct were **widely** disseminated to the public, achieving the target. The principles of official statistics contained in the African Charter were widely disseminated by the *Institut National des Statistiques* during Annual African Statistics Day in 2016, 2019, 2020, and 2022.
- The execution rate **of the activities under the project** in the strategic Human Resource Plan was 0 percent by closing, failing to achieve either the **revised target of 100 percent** or the original target of 50 percent. Although the project supported the development of the *Institut National des Statistiques* Human Resource Training Plan, the implementation of the plan proved difficult due to the lack of time and resources.
- A functional web-based data portal enabling access to the NSS data was **developed and** deployed -- <https://ins-congo-cg> -- meeting the target. The *Institut National des Statistiques* portal was made part of the Open Data Initiative of the African Development Bank, which collaborated with *L'Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne* (AFRISTAT) to provide member countries with the facility to house the data.

There was no data, through closing, for the other output indicators.



- The percentage of staff with competences in core areas of statistics -- the baseline value was 45 percent, and the target, 80 percent.
- The *Institut National des Statistique* has office spaces furnished with desks, chairs, computers, and operational Internet links by December 2015 -- these were not available in the baseline.
- The execution rate of the Information System Strategic Plan -- the baseline value was 0 percent, the target, 55 percent.

Outcomes. The project achieved the targets for two of the three outcome indicators defined at appraisal.

- The share of statistical products completed and published by the *Institut National des Statistiques* that followed international standards rose from 25 percent in the baseline to 85.3 percent by closing, exceeding the target of 70 percent. According to the ICR, the following surveys, studies, and reports followed international standards: (a) three *Enquête Congolaise Au près des Ménages* (Congolese Household Surveys); (b) five COVID-19 pandemic socio-economic effects surveys; (c) the *Cinquième Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitation* (Fifth Population and Housing Census) enumeration report, post-census results, and cartography report; (d) the *Recensement Général des Entreprises du Congo* (General Congolese Enterprise Census) identification report, principal results, and thematic analysis; (e) the survey of the informal sector; and (f) three Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices series. These products are available at the website of the *Institut National des Statistiques* (<https://ins-congo-cg>).
- The share of statistical output available to users through the open data portal reached 72.1 percent by closing, exceeding the target of 60 percent. According to the ICR, the following data were available in the open data portal of the *Institut National des Statistiques* (<http://rcongo.opendataforafrica.org/>): (a) the *Enquête Congolaise Au près des Ménages 1 et 2* (Congolese Household Survey 1 and 2); (b) the report on the household survey, with multiple indicators, (c) two Demographic and Health Surveys, with one deep dive report; (d) the Population Census data reports for 1984, 1996, and 2007; (e) the baseline survey on the use of integrated health centers; (f) the indicators from the seroprevalence survey of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS); (g) the baseline survey of the Agricultural Development and Rehabilitation of Rural Roads Project, and (h) various bulletins on the project.

There was no data, through closing, for the other outcome indicator.

- The Statistical Capacity Score -- the baseline value was 50, and the target, 70.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

To strengthen the NSS in the production and dissemination of quality statistics relevant for policies and decision making.

Revised Rationale



Theory of Change. The results chain remained unchanged. Only the composition of inputs changed: on institutional development -- with the introduction of performance based pay for staff; on data production -- with the conduct of the *Recensement Général des Entreprises du Congo*; and on infrastructure development -- with the construction of a completely new building for the *Institut National des Statistique* and the *Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification*

Outputs. In addition to meeting the targets for five output indicators originally defined at appraisal (see Objective 1) and retained at the second restructuring, the project achieved the targets for three output indicators added during the second restructuring.

- The *Institut National des Statistique - Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* (Center for Applied Statistics and Planning) complex was built and was operational by closing, achieving the target. Staff of the *Institut National des Statistique* started work, and faculty and students of the *Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification*, started school for academic year 2023-24, at the complex in September 2023.
- The new *Institut National des Statistique - Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* complex was only partially equipped and furnished by closing, partially achieving the target that it be fully equipped and furnished. The complex lacked a fully installed data center, some office partitioning, and some furniture because of budgetary shortfalls.
- The number of knowledge products on economic development issues produced with NSS data and disseminated to large audiences, rose from two in the baseline to nine by closing, partially achieving the target of ten. Four national accounts, three economic outlooks, and three commerce bulletins were produced and disseminated to large audiences.

Outcomes. In addition to meeting the targets for two outcome indicators originally defined at appraisal (see Objective 1) and retained at the second restructuring, the project achieved the target for another outcome indicator added at the second restructuring. There was also no data, through closing for the other outcome indicator defined at appraisal and retained at the second restructuring (see Objective 1).

- The number of NSS staff with formal degree in statistics, informatics, or demography increased from 40 in the baseline to 88 by closing, exceeding the target of 60. The additional 48 staff members consisted of: four statistics technicians, 9 statistics engineers, 12 statistics economists, 12 statistical application engineers, 10 demographers, and one data science and big data specialist.

Revised Rating

High

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 2

Revised Objective

To strengthen the NSS in the production and dissemination of quality statistics relevant for policies and decision making.

Revised Rationale



Theory of Change. The results chain remained unchanged. Only the composition of inputs varied: on institutional development -- with the cancellation of staff mentorship, and the cancellation of performance-based pay; on data production -- with the transfer of education and health data production to another Bank operation.

Outputs. In addition to meeting the targets for eight output indicators defined at the second restructuring (see Objective 1 - Revision 1), the project partially achieved the target for the output indicator added at the third restructuring.

- The number of trained students who passed the admissions exams to regional statistics schools was 17 percent by closing, exceeding the target of 15 percent. However, the target that at least ten percent of the candidates prepared to take the competitive exams were women was not met.

Outcomes. The project met the targets for three of the four outcome targets defined at the second restructuring and retained at the third restructuring (see Objective 1 - Revision 1). There was also no data, through closing for the other outcome indicator defined at appraisal and retained at the third restructuring (see Objective 1 - Revision 1).

Revised Rating

High

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 3

Revised Objective

To strengthen the NSS in the production and dissemination of quality statistics relevant for policies and decision making.

Revised Rationale

Theory of Change. The results chain remained unchanged. The composition of inputs remained unchanged from the third restructuring.

Outputs. In addition to meeting the targets for the nine output indicators defined at the third restructuring (see Objective 1 - Revision 2) and retained at the fourth restructuring, the project achieved the target for a tenth output indicator added at the fourth restructuring.

- **Data that were useful to identify people affected by climate change were collected through a population census or through a household budget survey, meeting the target.**

Outcomes. While meeting the targets for the three outcome indicators defined at the third restructuring (see Objective 1 - Revision 2) and retained at the fourth restructuring, the project failed to achieve the target for a fourth outcome indicator added at the fourth restructuring.

- The number of United Nations Statistics Division Minimum List Gender Indicators that were available using data collected within the past five years was one, failing to meet the target of 35. According to the ICR: (a) one indicator -- the number and proportion of children aged 5-17 years who were engaged in child labor, by age, and by gender -- was available in the website of the *Institut National*



des Statistiques; and (b) ten other indicators were collected through the *Enquête Harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages* (Harmonized Survey on Household Living Conditions) but were not yet available at the website of the *Institut National des Statistiques*.

Revised Rating

High

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To promote the demand for statistical information.

Rationale

Theory of Change. A public outreach program by the *Institut des Statistique* and other agencies of the NSS aimed at key users of data and statistics would build up demand by these consumers of information for the products and services of the NSS. The key stakeholders would include Government policy makers and bureaucrats, politicians, business enterprises, non-governmental organizations, international institutions, scholars, researchers, and educators at academic institutions, the media, and the general public. This focus on the demand side for data and statistics would complement the effort to strengthen data and statistical production and dissemination, which comprised project interventions on the supply side. The achievement of the objective would be evidenced by some measure of user satisfaction with the data and statistics produced by the NSS following the innovations supported by this project.

Outputs. The project achieved the target for one of six output indicators defined at appraisal.

- The number of outreach thematic activities to key stakeholders, such as the media, politicians, policy makers, and academia, rose from the original one in the baseline to 11 by closing, exceeding the original target of three. The project conducted several outreach and dissemination events with at least 122 key stakeholders during the launch of statistical products.

There was no data, through closing, for the other five output indicators.

- A continuous survey program is designed and implemented -- there was no survey program in the baseline; the target was to have a continuous survey program.
- The proportion of beneficiaries who implement at least 60 percent of their annual release calendar activities -- the target was 80 percent.
- The *Institut National des Statistiques* has in place a functional communications team -- there was no functional team in the baseline; the target was to have one.
- A code of conduct based on NSS core values is developed and disseminated -- no code of conduct was developed or disseminated in the baseline.
- The three best-performing project beneficiaries are nominated and rewarded in each category of the Data Quality Assessment Framework -- there were no nominations or rewards in the baseline.

Outcomes. The project partially achieved the target for one of two outcome indicators defined at appraisal.



- The User Satisfaction Index reached 63.7 at closing, partially achieving the target of 75. The project conducted two user satisfaction surveys -- the first in 2019 and the second in 2022 -- and focused on public agencies, private entities, and international organizations.

There was no data, through closing, for the other outcome indicator.

- The number of quote of statistics in the media -- there were five in the baseline; the target was 25.

Rating

Negligible

OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

To promote the demand for statistical information.

Revised Rationale

Theory of Change. The results chain remained unchanged.

Outputs. The project achieved the target for one output indicator defined at appraisal (see Objective 2) and retained at the second restructuring.

Outcomes. The project achieved the target for one outcome indicator defined at appraisal (see Objective 2) and retained at the second restructuring.

There was no data, through closing, for the other outcome indicator added at the second restructuring.

- The annual growth rate of the number of hits on the *Institut National des Statistiques* website -- the target was eight percent.

Revised Rating

Modest

OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 2

Revised Objective

To promote the demand for statistical information.

Revised Rationale

Outputs. The project achieved the target for one output indicator defined at appraisal (see Objective 2) and retained at the third restructuring.



Outcomes. The project achieved the target for one outcome indicator defined at appraisal (see Objective 2) and retained at the third restructuring.

There was no data, through closing, for the other outcome indicator added at the third restructuring.

- The annual growth rate of the number of hits on the *Institut National des Statistiques* website -- the target was eight percent.

Revised Rating

Modest

OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 3

Revised Objective

To promote the demand for statistical information.

Revised Rationale

Theory of Change. The results chain remained unchanged.

Outputs. The project achieved the target for one output indicator defined at appraisal (see Objective 2) and retained the fourth restructuring.

Outcomes. The project partially achieved the target for the outcome indicator added at the fourth restructuring.

- The User Satisfaction Index reached 63.7 at closing, partially achieving the target of 75. The project conducted two user satisfaction surveys -- the first in 2019 and the second in 2022 -- focused on public agencies, private entities, and international organizations.

Revised Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

The overall efficacy of the original objective is rated modest.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Modest

Primary Reason

Insufficient evidence



OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale

The overall efficacy of the Revision 1 is rated substantial.

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 2

Overall Efficacy Revision 2 Rationale

The overall efficacy of Revision 2 is rated substantial.

Overall Efficacy Revision 2 Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 3

Overall Efficacy Revision 3 Rationale

The overall efficacy of Revision 3 is rated high.

Overall Efficacy Revision 3 Rating

High

5. Efficiency

Economic Efficiency. There was no systematic analysis done of the economic efficiency of the project either at appraisal or at closing.

- The Project Appraisal Document claimed that "statistics was a public good; affected a wide range of economic, financial, and social domains; and presented positive externalities for many economic agents." Better data production and analysis would: (a) inform public debate on matters of economic, financial, and social concern; and (b) lead to better targeting of public policies and more efficient use of public resources. The document, however, admitted that measuring the economic benefit of the project was a challenge, and did not calculate any economic or financial rate of return. Rather, the PAD simply asserted that "Looking at all other alternatives to address the weakness of Republic of Congo statistical system, the proposed project was the least costly option," shifting from a cost-benefit to a cost-effectiveness paradigm that it however did not elaborate.



- Like the PAD, the ICR argued that the project outputs were not amenable to a detailed cost-benefit analysis but concluded that the project achieved economic efficiency by improving the baseline data in the socioeconomic, health, and agriculture sectors. Shifting to a cost-effectiveness framework, the ICR offered the following findings: (a) the average cost of a survey per household of US\$203 in the Republic of Congo was relatively low compared to the same surveys in the region -- US\$243 in Benin, US\$311 in Niger, US\$331 in Mali, and US\$450 in the Democratic Republic of Congo; (b) the cost for the construction of the new *Institut National des Statistique - Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* complex was reasonably low compared to other construction activities in the country -- approximately US\$470 per square meter.

Operational Efficiency. According to the ICR: (a) the project successfully completed all planned large statistical operations in addition to advancing internal institutional reforms and finishing a large building construction; (b) the project disbursed 97 percent of the IDA and IBRD financing (US\$41.6 of US\$43 million); although (c) the time needed to accomplish some project activities was longer than planned -- it took 10 months after approval for the project to become effective; the preparatory activities for all major surveys (the *Recensement Général des Entreprises du Congo*, the *Enquête Harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages*, and the *Cinquième Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitation*) took longer than originally planned; and the construction activities were delayed for various reasons, with works starting three years after approval. While the second restructuring extended the project completion date by 22 months due to the AF, the third restructuring had to extend the project completion date by another 29 months to compensate for delays in project implementation.

Based on the foregoing evidence, this ICR Review rates the efficiency as modest, lower than the ICR rating of substantial.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Based on a split evaluation, the overall outcome of the project is rated moderately satisfactory.



	Original	Revision 1	Revision 2	Revision 3
Relevance of Objectives	High			
Efficacy:				
Objective 1 - To strengthen the NSS in the production and, dissemination of timely and robust statistics relevant for policies and decision making.	Substantial			
Objective 1 - Revised - To strengthen the NSS in the production and dissemination of quality statistics relevant for policies and decision making		High	High	High
Objective 2 - To promote the demand for statistical information	Negligible	Modest	Modest	Substantial
Overall Efficacy	Modest	Substantial	Substantial	High
Efficiency	Modest			
Outcome Rating	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory
Outcome Rating Value	3	4	4	4
Amount Disbursed, US\$ million	5.7	19.1	29.3	35.8
Disbursement %	15.9	53.4	81.8	100
Weight Value	15.9=15.9	53.4-15.9=37.5	81.8-53.4=28.4	100-81.8=18.2
Total Weights	0.48	1.50	1.14	0.74
Overall Outcome Rating	3.86 = Moderately Satisfactory			

a. Outcome Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The risks to the sustainability of the development outcomes are substantial.

Institutional Capacity Risk. Although the project helped upgrade the institutional capacity of the *Institut National des Statistique* in many aspects of data production, dissemination, and use, the ability of the *Institut National des Statistique* to effectively lead and coordinate the NSS remains a work in progress. The institutional reform agenda remains full, according to the ICR, with the next priorities centered on: (a) the adoption of operating processes developed under the project as standard operating procedures of the NSS; (b) the upgrading of the sectoral statistical services, after the initial focus on the *Institut National des Statistique* and the *Direction des Etudes et de Planification*; (c) the "huge shortage of quality staff" even after recent staff upgrades supported by this project; and (d) the implementation of the training plan developed by the *Institut National des Statistique*.

Budgetary Risk. With the Republic of Congo undergoing a medium-term fiscal consolidation program supported by an Extended Credit Facility arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (for SDR 234 million over 2022-2024), budgetary support for statistical capacity building will compete with other spending priorities of the Government. According to the ICR, budgetary constraints are reflected in: (a) a low budget for operations and maintenance for the new *Institut National des Statistique - Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* complex; (b) a lack of funds to finance scholarships and stipends for



students to study at regional African statistics schools; and (c) some uncertainty about the prospects for hiring 34 out of the 48 recent graduates from the regional statistical school as full time professionals of the NSS (the 34 had been working as interns with financial support from the project).

Risk Mitigation. Approved by the Bank for US\$290 million in September 2023 and for an additional US\$150 million in March 2024, the Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West and Central Africa - Series of Projects II (P180085) aims to help Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, the *Communauté Économique et Monétaire* (Central African Economic and Monetary Community), and most recently Gabon and the Republic of Congo (with US\$60 million of the AF) to "improve country statistical performance, regional harmonization, data access and use, and to enhance modernization of the statistical system in participating countries." This new operation for the Republic of Congo will help build on the progress made by the Statistics Capacity Building Project in strengthening the NSS by focusing this time on: (a) further equipping the new *Institut National des Statistique - Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* complex; (b) conducting a household budget survey in 2025; and (c) supporting the production of harmonized data for policy support of climate change mitigation and adaptation related to the country's *Contribution Déterminée Au Niveau National* (Nationally Determined Contribution) of 2021. This new operation will help sustain the development outcomes achieved by the Statistics Capacity Building Project.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Analytical Underpinning. The project was informed by diagnostic work produced by the Government, international agencies, and peer countries. A review of the NSS, conducted in 2011 by the Republic of Congo, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), the *Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsharienne* (Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa), the statistical office of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the statistical office of Benin examined the governance practices, organizational structure, strategic planning, service to users, funding, and sustainability of the *Institut National des Statistiques*. While the study determined that the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics was sound and that Government was firmly committed to reforming the NSS, it concluded that: (a) the NSS was poorly led and coordinated; and (b) the lack of qualified staff and professional skills throughout the system made it extremely difficult to produce reliable statistics.

Lessons Learned. The Bank had supported statistical capacity building in at least twenty countries in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2004. The Bank drew on lessons learned from this history to design an operation that covered three vital initiatives -- the institutional development of statistical agencies (covering the legal framework, organizational structure, statistical standards and methodologies, and training of staff), the production of statistics and statistical products (censuses, surveys, administrative data systems, economic statistics, and social sector data), and the improvement of the physical infrastructure for statistical production and dissemination (the information technology infrastructure and data management systems). The project advanced all three pillars in the two project objectives.

Collaboration with Development Partners. The Bank helped create a Statistic Thematic Group of international partners, for which it acted as permanent secretary, to coordinate international support by



development partners for the implementation of the country's National Strategy for the Development of Statistics. The coordinating group would also help avoid random interventions and duplication of activities, which had marred the implementation of the predecessor Programmatic Statistics Development Plan in 2005-09

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Supervision. The Bank supervised the implementation of the project regularly. The Bank fielded fifteen supervision missions over the ten-year duration of the project, for which it filed 15 Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs). According to the ICR, the Bank: (a) dispatched senior technical experts with the supervision missions; (b) provided advice and training to the PIU on procurement, financial management, and environmental and social risk management; (c) fielded technical experts every two months to supervise the construction of the new *Institut National des Statistique - Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification* complex; (d) often resolved issues readily by identifying emerging risks and problems and raising them with senior Bank management; (e) communicated directly with senior Government officers; and (f) complemented in-person meetings in-country with virtual sessions. Three Task Team Leaders (TTLs) managed Bank supervision over ten years. Because two of the TTTLs had worked with the project since its inception, the transition was not difficult, according to the ICR. This was less so with the Environmental and Social Specialist, where turnovers among twelve specialists caused disruptions.

Adaptation. The Bank responded readily to the fiscal straits faced by the Government in 2015 by restructuring the project early to shift the burden of financing from the Government to the Bank. The Bank processed one more restructuring and two AF quickly and efficiently.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The Bank defined a results framework at appraisal with five outcome indicators and thirteen output (intermediate results) indicators to measure the achievement of the project objectives (the Project Appraisal Document also supplied five intermediate results indicators to measure project management -- not part of the assessment of efficacy). The results indicators had baseline and target values and identifiable data



sources -- one from the Bank (the Statistical Capacity Score) and the rest from the *Institut National des Statistiques*, including the Project Implementing Unit, and other ministries.

The M&E plan called for the *Institut National des Statistiques*, as the project implementing entity, to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project and to prepare quarterly project reports to be submitted to the Bank within 45 days from the end of each reporting period. The operation's Project Management component would fund M&E activities and the Project Implementing Unit would hire an M&E specialist.

The Bank also planned for a "functional M&E" -- a system of quarterly workshops attended not only by the High Commission on Statistics and the *Institut National des Statistiques* but also by the Statistics Thematic Group (see Section 8.A) to assess progress with the project and to learn from the collective experience of this and similar projects supported by development partners. Discussions at these periodic workshops would "go beyond quantitative measurement of progress to focus on qualitative improvements that contributed to the broad goal of the project," according to the PAD.

b. M&E Implementation

The Bank revised the results framework and the set of outcome and output indicators during restructuring and at each AF (see Section 4). That many of these results indicators would be dropped at succeeding restructuring episodes suggest that they were not well considered. By closing, the project had five outcome indicators, three of which survived from appraisal, and eleven output indicators, six of which survived from appraisal, albeit some were reworded, or their targets changed.

The M&E design was implemented as planned. The Government submitted project reports to the Bank. The Bank monitored the project regularly and produced ISRs (see Section 8.B), Aide Memoires, and Back-to-Office Reports to record and report on progress with the project.

c. M&E Utilization

The M&E data were useful for restructuring the project February 2017 and April 2021.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

Environmental and Social Safeguards. The project was listed as an environmental assessment category C project at appraisal ("no environmental review is required"), but reclassified as an environmental assessment category B project at the second restructuring and first AF ("some type of environmental assessment/review/plan is required, but limited in scope and flexible in structure, reflecting **corresponding** the limited environmental impacts of the project and the anticipated relatively straightforward mitigation"). The restructuring, which involved the construction of a new *Institut National des Statistique* -



Centre d'Application de la Statistique et de la Planification complex triggered safeguards policies OP/BP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment) because of potential negative environmental and social impacts, OP/BP 4.11 (Physical Cultural Resources) in anticipation of potential impacts on physical cultural resources from the construction, and OP/BP 4.12 (Involuntary Resettlement) to manage any potential risks related to resettlement. The project complied with the requirements of all triggered safeguards policies during implementation, including the preparation and public disclosure of the Environmental and Social Management Framework and Resettlement Policy Framework prior to the start of project activities. There were no fiduciary compliance issues during implementation, according to the ICR, and the project was rated satisfactory in the last ISR of January 30, 2023, for overall safeguards and for compliance with OP/BP 4.01, OP/BP 4.11 and OP/BP 4.12.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Procurement. The project complied with all rules and plans related to procurement, according to the ICR, although procurement activities were interrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic. PIU benefitted from hands-on training on procurement provided by the Bank task team, including on the use of the Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement, the online system that helped the Bank and borrowers plan, record, and track key stages of the procurement process. Procurement was rated satisfactory in the last ISR, from moderately satisfactory until May 2021.

Financial Management. Financial management was rated satisfactory in the last ISR. However, there were problems with financial management earlier, meriting a moderately satisfactory rating until November 2021: (a) hurdles with releasing Government counterpart funds after the first disbursement (a condition for effectiveness) delayed project implementation; (b) fifty tablets purchased for the *Recensement Général des Entreprises du Congo* were lost and had to be compensated for by the Government; (c) approximately US\$6,000 was also misappropriated and was similarly compensated for by the Government.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	The ICR rated efficiency as substantial. This ICR Review rates efficiency as modest, due to poor operational efficiency and the lack of a robust basis for judging economic efficiency.



Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	High	Substantial	There were too many changes to the results indicators that were not well considered.
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

Two lessons are drawn from the ICR, with some adaptation.

In operations where government counterpart is the principal source of project financing, the government must firmly earmark funds for the project. The Bank also needs to verify the ready availability of these funds in a dedicated account at the public treasury. In this project, the Government committed to financing US\$28.2 of the project cost, and the Bank, US\$4.8 million. It took the Government 10 months to release the initial US\$3.6 million of its commitment, delaying the effectiveness of the project by as many months. Then the Government could not finance the balance, necessitating a restructuring of the project and the first AF of US\$25 million.

The Bank needs to clearly and explicitly verify operational assumptions embedded in a project's design and assess all angles of operational risk. In this project, several assumptions turned into operational problems. For example, it was assumed that the performance-based pay proposal would be readily accepted by the staff of the *Institut National des Statistiques*. However, the staff deemed the demands for performance pay to be too high. In another case, it was expected that international experts and the local staff would work together smoothly. However, resentment about international-local pay disparities derailed cooperation.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is consistent with OPCS guidelines on ICRs for investment project financing operations. Considering four episodes of changes to the project activities, the output and outcome indicators, the project cost and financing, and the project schedule, the ICR presents a detailed account of the evolution of the project over a lengthy period. The efficacy assessment is outcome-oriented and based on the degree of achievement of the results targets. The efficiency assessment is too generous, however. The ICR presents ample evidence to support its assessment of the Bank's performance at design and implementation, including the analytic underpinnings of the project, the lessons learned from similar Bank operations, and the extent of collaboration with other development partners. The ICR draws lessons that would be valuable to other statistical capacity building operations in similar settings.



a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial